

# **-Starstruck-**



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## Chapter 1

Severin Snape was in line at the bookstore, waiting for her turn as the arrogant boy snapped and walked straight to the main cash register.

Some people began to grumble, but were soon silenced by shrieking and enthusiastic girls. The guy flashed a smile to them and walked over to the cash register.

Severin was stunned by his audacity and blatant disregard for the waiting people. She assumed he was some stupid superstar based on the girls' fangirling reaction from before, but that wasn't what allowed him to act like that. "Hey, boy!" She exclaimed irritably, "Wait for your turn like everyone else! We all don't have the whole day to spent here."

The male froze in his steps, before he turned around. His hazel eyes met with her black ones before his lips curled to an amused smile.

Severin did not care about the fuss the surrounding females created. She entered a stalemate with the young, about 17 years old, male.

Admittedly, he's very handsome. The fact only convinced her that her speculation must have been at least half true. He must have been a superstar.

Severin quickly took over and pointed her finger toward the end of the line, "There." She said in frozen tone.

The guy seems unimpressed. He leaned nonchalantly on the counter and smiled the smile that undoubtedly served him extensively on stage.

Severin raised an eyebrow and did not lower her pointing hand.

"Now, I'm sure it's not such a deal." The young man dismissed lightly and winked at her, "I have really busy day."

"Like all of us. So please consider." Severin's voice was frozen and uncompromising.

"Aw, that's very cruel of you." He said, pronouncing the words in a playful manner. However, somewhere in his heart, he wondered if he lost his charm.

He turned to the girl behind him, who has been squealing, before asking, "Do you mind if I go first?"

Of course, the girl shook her head, her eyes as if hypnotized. James turned to Severin again, "See?"

Severin rolled her eyes, "Right. What do I expect from an idiot?" She palmed her forehead exasperatedly before sighing, "Then this little miss, please, take his place and go to the back to line up. Basic math. Really."

The girl returned to her senses immediately. "Excuse me? Why should I do that?!" Straight protest.

Severin shrugged, "I don't understand either, but the one who chose to give up your turn for him is you."

"But... but ..." The girl opened her eyes, "It's Potter!" Shrieked, "James Potter!"

"For my part, he could be Prince Charles." Severin was unimpressed, "He still has to wait his turn."

Protests and gossip quickly spread among the girls present. Severin folded her hands and stubbornly stared at the celebrity beginning to look a little less comfortable, but far more curious.

"So, what's the decision?" A tiny, winning smirk made its way to her lips. She tilted her head challengingly as her eyes bore into his.

James.. for a moment lost his soul there. He quickly came back though, a small blush making its way to his cheek.

His reaction was odd. Severin slightly furrowed her brows and looked at him questioningly, the smirk changing to a pursed lips.

He laughed it off before answering, "Yea, I'll go to the back."

Severin waited for him to do the thing. Potter went back, where she heard him talking to some girls. There were lots of screams and Potter signed some pictures.

His arrogant yet pleasant voice carried to the end of the queue.

"Girls, will you let me go first?" Severin snorted compared to the innocent voice he made. But the fangirls seem to have fallen for the lie easily. "I have to finish really fast, I have new photos this afternoon. Next week it will be all newsletters." He promised.

Severin rolled her eyes as she glanced over her shoulder. Potter somehow found his way right behind her and there he stood.

He caught her eye, and winked flirtatiously. In response, Severin looked at him furiously.

"Sorry not sorry, but I won't move." She said through her gritted teeth. He merely smiled, "Trust me, that was not my intention."

Looking at him distrustfully, she huffed before turning to the decreasing line in front of her. Just two more people, then it'll be her turn.

James pursed his lips when he realized she's ignoring him. "Severin Snape, was it?" He asked, despite knowing the answers.

She turned around in shock, "How did-" He smirked, before pointing at the crowd of girls behind him, "Those sweet girls told me. You are quite famous, or is it infamous? it seems."

Severin mocked. "What can you expect from such unwise people?"

Her reaction caused Potter's smile to widen, god knows why. Severin frowned for a moment, but simply shrugged. Fame seemed have come at the expense of precious brain cells.

Well, that wasn't her problem.

Severin returned to look ahead. Soon it was turn. She paid for her purchase and was hit by a direct move outside the store.

"Hey, wait, Snape!" The call was heard behind her.

She did not stop in her track, and even picked her pace slightly. Just a few steps away and she'll be out.

But of course, a tug to her wrist stopped her. She muttered something under her breath before turning around and snapped, "What?"

"Uh, I thought you might want to get some coffee, my treat, you know, as a nice to meet you?" James released his hold on her wrist, which he noted is quite thin.

She cocked one of her eyebrows, "No thanks, Mr.I-have-a-photoshoot-this-afternoon."

"Oh, right! Then come with me! Come on, you know you want it!" Exclaimed the young man excitedly.

"No, I'm not."

"Don't be stupid, of course you are! Everyone wants it." Severin was amazed at how confident he was and in the truth of his words.

"Uh wow, you have some sort of huge megalomania." Severin noted. "I'm not interested. Don't make me repeat myself again."

"Then as an I'm sorry? Take it as my apology for being an ass?" He tried again. "You know, I knew a close-by cafe that served really nice cups of coffee."

The surroundings are starting to stare at them again, some even took out their phone to record the whole situation.

"You are..." A pause. "Fine!" She hissed. She basically stomped her foot as she went out, him following her before they come shoulder to shoulder.

She still kept her distance though. And as a presumably good liar, he was truthful when he said the cafe was close.

At the door the girl froze.

"Hey, darling, are you okay?" Potter asked behind her.

Severin slowly turned around. "Potter." Started, "This cafe is the most expensive in town." She said slowly, pointing at the price tag, as if thinking he was too stupid to understand himself.

"Oh, don't worry about it." The guy lightly canceled, "I'll pay."

The girl's black eyes narrowed furiously and her nostrils flared. "What do you take me for? A charity destination?!" Hissed threateningly. She circled her heels and stormed away.

"No, wait a minute!" Exclaimed the young celebrity. He rushed to get her and grabbed her hand, "Listen-"

"No, listen to me, Potter." If stares could kill, Severin would certainly not feel sorry for him. "I don't need your kindness and goodness. Keep. Away. From. Me. Am I clear?"

James ran his fingers through his hair frustratedly before he said, "We'll change the place, okay? I didn't know that it was 'that' expensive."

He was almost half pleading at this point, and yea, it worked as Severin's expression softened. She sighed, "I'll choose the place."

It took them a five minutes walk before they arrived at another shop. It looked very normal, so



normal that he would not have noticed it.

She eyed his flabbergasted face and snorted before taking a step in.

"Do you want to say something?" Severin asked defiantly as the boy opened his mouth.

He closed it and shook his head. "It's... okay, I guess." He shrugged in defeat, had not yet turned to one of the tables and held the chair for Severin.

The girl crossed her arms and raised her chin, before pulling another chair and sitting on it. Potter blinked for a moment, but flinched and dropped himself on the chair he was holding.

As the waitress approached to place their order, Potter apologized and walked toward the bathroom, but the girl noticed him before he could.

"Aww! It's James Potter!" Screamed and made some heads turn to them. There were camera flashes and Potter smiled at the crowd of fans. He was really trying to get away as quickly as possible, but when he turned back to their table, Severin wasn't there.

He glanced at his watch and his heart missing a beat, he was late for photoshoot.

Severin only glanced indifferently to the place she just left, a crowd taking her place.

He was pretty tall so she doesn't even need to tiptoe to see him. Because of her hesitance, however, she managed to catch the helplessness in his face.

A tug on his wrist pulled him out of the crowd before a black cap was shoved to his head. Severin clicked her tongue as she pulled both of them out of the cafe.

Of course, the crowd chased after them. They had to take several turns here and there before they finally avoided the craze.

"And this, is why I didn't want to go." She mumbled while gasping for breath.

"That's the reason?" Potter asked.

Severin sour her face, "And the company." said. "Here. You're apologized, that's enough. Please keep your distance now." Without giving him the chance to reply, she turned and mingled in the crowd.

James looked at her in stupidity for a long moment, his mouth slightly open, then recovered and rushed to his place of work.

Sirius was already waiting there, leaning lazily against the wall, while the photographers were making final preparations.

"Thought you're gonna ditch the shoot." Sirius chuckled as he stood up and clapped him on the back.

James scoffed and shrugged him off, "Nah, just met a slight disturbance."

"A girl?" Sirius guessed with a smirk on his face. He was merely joking, so he was shocked when his best friend actually nodded.

"Wait, what? Tell me about it!" His eyes widened as he asked. James rolled his eyes at his friend's eagerness.

"There's not much to tell, just an ordinary girl who didn't want to go out for coffee with me... Sirius!" Shouted James, raising his hands dramatically, "How could she refuse something like that?"

"Wait, wait. You want to tell me that a girl refused the great James Potter?!" Sirius made a complete display of astonishment. He smirked. "Bud, you seem to be losing your touch."

"I didn't!" James retorted.

"Then, what about her?" Sirius goaded with a chuckle. "The great James Potter, rejected by a girl. Pity."

James glared at his friend's antique, "She didn't reject me! She just refused my invitation!"

"Same thing."

James glared at his good friend. And Sirius stuck his elbow in it. "So what will you do?"

"What will I?" Repeated James.

Sirius raised his eyebrows. "Obviously, you're not going to let one proud girl ruin the sequence of victories for the girls' hearts, are you?"

James blinked and a slow, grinning smile began to spread across his face steadily. "Of course not. This girl will fall at my feet just like everyone else, you will see."

## Chapter 2

It was a bright day, bright enough to send her scowling as Severin trudged to the main exit of her university.

That's probably why she didn't notice him in front of the gate, or at least the crowds around him because she basically kept her head down to avoid the sun.

When she did, oh she was never more proud of her reflex as she turned on her heels and decided to go through the back exit instead.

Pushing through this crowd would have taken hours, and she really had no patience today for the guy's star disease. Basically, she hated all the limelight and the entertainment world, for her, the people who dealt with it were considered shallow and nothing else.

Whatever, she had tons of homework and an important chemistry test the next day. Time was not something she could spend.

But of course, when had life ever gone her way? It only took a single call to her name and everyone turned to stare at her escaping figure.

The number of gazes sent goosebumps up her body as she quickened her pace, gripping the books in her hand.

Asking to left her alone was too much? She couldn't shake off the annoyance that had befallen her.

Severin slipped into a narrow alleyway and from there she turned to another one, then she made a short turn and opted for a more side road, really hoping to get home already.

A sound of a honking car sounded right next to her and made the girl jump in surprise. She turned her face irritably to the luxury vehicle which made sure to travel exactly as she walked and met brown eyes with a sparkle of laughter.

"Need a ride?" He asked.

"No. Not now, not ever." She spat out. "Just what is it that you want?"

She continued to walk, not even glancing back. But she knew that the car is slowly creeping behind her, keeping the same distance.

He shrugged, "Oh, not much actually." A chuckle, "Just some of your time, maybe?"

"Oh, just that?" Skeptically, she glanced at her watch and put her hand on her heart in mock wonder, "Look." She raised her hand and slapped her other finger on the watch, "The time doesn't stop for you, surprisingly."

The boy just smirked in return, showing off his perfect white teeth. Severin snorted and turned away.

"Come on, Snape." James continued to insist, but Severin ignored him. "Just an hour or two, it's not much."

The girl rolled her eyes. "Potter, time is something I can't spend, please leave me."

"Okay." He agreed, which surprised her. She was about to heave a relieved sigh when she heard him say, "I guess I'll come back tomorrow then."

She almost tripped and had to spend some time stabilizing herself. She turned and glared at him, as if trying to kill him with her gaze.

James stepped out of his car, circled it, and opened the door to the passenger seat, "Come right in?"

Severin stumbles back, taking care to keep a distance between them. "Are you aware of how disturbing this is?" She asked, her eyes reflect disbelief.

James cocked his head back and laughed liberally. He knows, understanding has hit her, how handsome he is when he acts like that.

Well, that's not something that would have impressed Severin. She growled at him and turned her back to him, returning to march vigorously.

"Well, see you tomorrow then!" James shouted to her back, to which she did not react.

But she could not help but wonder in fear, how the hell did he know where she studies?

The thought filled her head up as she walked. Even until she reached her house, she gained no conclusion and could only push all the credits to his superstar identity.

And why on earth does this guy insist on pursuing her? Severin pinched the bridge of her nose, feeling a terrific headache begin to rise.

She had to calm down and forget about this nonsense, otherwise tomorrow's test was lost.

And if she wanted to get a good job and get out of debts, she had to focus on what really mattered. She had no time to spend on star disease of people who have no content in life.

She stared at the rundown house in front of her before sighing. Shuffling her feet uneasily, she took a breath and stepped in.

It was quiet, which is better than the usual chaos. Beer bottles were scattered around, some in the form of shards.

The house reeks from the alcohol abuse. She cautiously walked in, listening to any sound of breath.

There wasn't any, that means her father must have been snoring off in his room.

She hated it, she hated her life so much. This is why she has learned such persistence and determination. She dreamed of the day that she could leave it all behind.

The girl walked to her room quietly, she would grab something to eat later, before having to go to work.

She sat down at the shaky wooden table and opened the textbook. If there was something she loved in the world, it was chemistry. Very soon she was immersed in learning, when she looked at her watch, it was already evening.

She jumped right away, cursing the loss of her sense of time and rushing off to her place of work. Fortunately for her, she worked an evening shift.



The place she worked at was the restaurant 10 minutes away from her home. It did not get her much, but she liked the ambience and the people around.

"Almost late again, Sev?" A female voice sounded just after she put on her work clothing. She did not have to turn around to know that a red haired female is standing by the door.

"Was not! I was on time, okay?" Severin protested, but slight mirth could be found in her voice.

The red haired female giggled and said, "Okay. You were on time. Really, really, on time."

Severin smiled, for the first time today, a real smile. Somehow her best friend always managed to make her smile.

"And even if you weren't," Lily shrugged, "you know I would cover you."

"I know." And she did.

She went after Lily to submit some of the prepared orders. "You just can't imagine what a crazy day I went through."

"Really?" Lily raised a red eyebrow at her and Severin nodded. She put down the dish she was holding. "Here's your invitation, sir. Sev, I'm expecting to hearing the whole story when we're finish."

As soon as they finished, Lily basically pulled her to the staff room. The former took the seat first before patting the space beside her, "The stage is all yours."

Severin's lips twitched but she sat down beside her anyway. She repeated the event from yesterday to today's afternoon.

Lily's expression when she mentioned the creep's name baffled her (Lily basically widened her eyes to the point her eyebrows were lost in her bangs).

And Severin can see that her friend is going to bombard her with questions as soon as she finished recounting.

"James Potter? Are you talking about James Potter?!" Lily screamed. "The brightest star on the screens in recent years?"

Severin shrugged indifferently, "Looks like that."

Lily shook her head. "Sev, James is the most famous and coveted celeb in the world! You can't just wave away him like that! Do you know how many girls would kill to get such an invation from him? He seems to want to date you."

The dark-haired girl rolled her eyes. "The guy's head is too full of himself to notice others. The only thing he wants is to marked another girl who he managed to impress."

"Severin Snape! You can't throw such an offer in the trash!"

Severin's face scrunched before she realizes something. She stared at Lily's face with mixed feelings before she asked, "Uh.. You like him that much?"

"Well, he has everything? Money, check, face, check, his personality is not too bad," Severin cringed at this, "He got the good family background. I think any girl will not not like him?"

'Well, I don't.' Severin thought before shaking her head. If Lily likes him that much, that she got to do what she must do as her best friend. She made up her mind, "Lils, do you.. have anything on this Sunday?"

Lily was confused at the sudden change of topic but thought that Severin did not want to talk about him anymore. She shrugged, "I don't think I have any plans. Why?"

Severin smiled, "Just, I thought, maybe we'll go to a movie Sunday's night? It'll be just after my last test this month, a reason for a little treat."

"Obviously, Sev, you don't even have to ask." It was not common for Severin to agree to spend her savings, but she learned and worked so hard, she deserved a little treat.

Lily smiled, "What time?"

## Chapter 3

A whistle sounded in the air as James walked happily into the set, which made Sirius look at him in wonder.

"Good mood today?" He asked. "Is this still about the girl?"

James nodded, "She invited me to go for a movie! I knew it! She's falling for my charm, no?"

He was about to ask her out again today when the female did not even run away and asked him outright to go for a movie with her.

Well, nobody really refuses James Potter.

He was waiting for her near the college, leaning nonchalantly on the luxury car with one hand tucked in his hair. It was one of his most charming poses.

He saw her staring at him for a moment, before walking towards her house.

"Yo, Severin!" He followed her, "What about the round you promised me?"

The girl paused and sighed, not yet turned to him, a big sweet smile spread on her face. "Potter," she said, a strange spark that James found intriguing, a glance from her eyes.

Severin's face is almost cramped from forcing the smile as she continued, "I thought about it. Let's go for a movie on Sunday?"

Her tone was rather flattering, which is good. But to her ears, it sounded sickeningly sweet. She had to remind herself five times that this is all for Lily.

James gaped, not expecting that, before a very wide, cocky smirk tugged on his lips. He said, "Of course! Why not? I've been waiting for you to say that!"

"Then she said that at eight, a movie that she hasn't seen yet will be shown. See, mate?" James wrapped his arm around Sirius's shoulders, "I told you nobody can refuse me. It's a written rule."

Sirius playfully pushed his friend, "No, I told you not to give up. Your good name could have been ruined, if not me!"

James could not stop the grin from leaving his face as he waited for the day to come. He's not even sure why he's anticipating it so much.

He turned to his phone and messaged Severin to ask her about the meeting place, and probably try to convince her to consider having dinner with him.

Severin noticed the announcement in her phone and furrowed her brows before scowling. She just has to give him her phone numbers so they can communicate, which, she thinks is a bad decision.

But well. It was too late to regret it, though, that everything would be behind soon.

She looked at the phone again. 'I'll meet you at the cinema. Don't look for me sooner.' Her thin fingers typed quickly. With second thought, she added: 'We'll talk about dinner already on the spot.' She pressed the send button and set the phone aside, just to pick it up again when a notification sound was heard.

Severin let out a gasp, the guy insists on interrupting.

'See you soon <3~' James tapped the send button before giddily (He doesn't even know why he feels so antsy) turning his focus to his work.

Severin furrowed her brows and decided to leave it on read. She relayed the information to Lily, who okay-ed it in one go.

It was a norm for them to simply meet up in the cinema so Lily has yet to realize Severin's intention.

At least tonight would be quiet, Severin smirked to herself. Lily can enjoy the publicity frenzy, though, Severin doesn't really think her best friend will enjoy the long run. Potter was too self-centered, and even though Lily adored him, she wasn't blind and stupid for it. So that one evening it won't hurt the couple, and after that they'll stop driving her crazy.

And who knows? Maybe they would really fit together, Lily could have done better than James, but that's her choice. Severin was a little sorry if her plan to save for apartment with Lily would be destroyed, but she would support the redhead.

Thinking to that point, Severin happily continued studying. She was only able to realize that the time had reached evening when her phone vibrated, showing Lily's name.

She picked it up without much thought, only to hear Lily's shout over the phone, "Se. Ve. Rin!! You lied to me!"

"Uh.. what?" Severin asked in surprise. She was prepared for another scream, so she distanced the phone away from her poor ear.

To say Lily was fuming won't be an understatement. She explained everything that happened fifteen minutes earlier and dared Severin to say it's not her fault.

Lily entered into the cinema and walked to the seats on the tickets they had set, high behind. It was Severin's favorite seat. She argued that it was helpful if you found the movie boring and wanted to escape quickly. They both also liked to analyze the characters and laugh at their stupidity during the movie.

Lily bought some popcorn to share, sure that Severin doesn't managed to eat at her house.

The shock that hit her when she arrived on the place was indescribable, when instead of meeting her friend's black and penetrating eyes, she found flirting hazel's eyes.

She dumbly stared at the unknown man who looks very familiar. It only took her a second to remember that she has seen her in lots of movies, advertisements and all forms of medias.

"James Potter?" She asked carefully. The man nodded slightly to acknowledge her call. "Did Severin ask you to come?"

Just half an hour ago, James was idly wasting his time, waiting for Severin to come. It was only five minutes prior to the start of the movie that a beautiful red haired girl approached the seats.

Honestly, he thought she had misread her seat number and was waiting for her to leave when she mentioned Severin's name.

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He nodded slowly and the girl patted her forehead in annoyance. "I'll kill her!" She murmured to herself quietly.

He was just beginning to digest that the girl he was so sure he could conquer, just cheated and made fun of him. "What..." he asked stupidly, "Where's Severin?"

The redhead shook her head, "I don't think she'll come."

"What do you mean?" James opened his mouth in shock, his mind unable to catch up on recent events.

"I'm Lily," the girl swung her lush red hair back, "Severin and I were supposed to watch this movie today."

She said that while not maintaining their eye contact because she was busy with her phone. After clicking Severin's number, she placed the phone by her ear.

It did not take long for the other line to pick up. And Severin must have not understand what is going on as Lily rolled her eyes and recounted the situation.

The latter huffed as she said, "You have five minutes to explain to me why are you doing this or else.."

"You asked." The voice from the other side of the line was clear and indifferent. She could almost imagine Severin's expression, with her eyebrow raised and her face saying it was just being asked.

"I am what-?"

"Remember, Lil. You said you were dating him, overall I made you a shortcut. Have fun while you can have a date with a celebrity."

The conversation broke off, giving Lily no chance to respond and demand further answers. She



turned to James and smiled hesitantly.

The guy ran his hand through his hair, "So, you're Severin's friend?"

Lily squeezed an awkward smile, "Yes." She paused before continuing, "Sorry about the... unsightly conversation."

James laughed it off before changing the conversation to something bearable. Lily understood the cue and soon, they were talking as if they had been friends for years.

Only after the light darkened and the movie started did James let go of his smile. He pursed his lips in confusion, knowing that his plan failed but not the reason.

He was a gentleman, and as one, he could not abandon a girl alone. Not to mention that it was Severin's friend and he still had to fulfill the task he set for himself. He had to stay on the good side of the dark-haired girl.

Lily turned out as a nice girl, she seemed to adore him and knew everything about the movies he starred in. Simple fangirl. Overall the date wasn't bad, but that's it. He didn't even know what he was so disappointed with, he met such girls every new week and it made no difference. He felt strange.

Not knowing frustrates him. Not being in control of his emotion even more. He couldn't even focus on the movie because his mind was pinned to Severin.

Lily took a glance at him once a while but he couldn't care more about his expression. By the third time she glanced, she widened her eyes before nodding understandingly and turning back to the movie.

Lily fiddled her phone uneasily but excitedly. She figured that this not-exactly-a-date actually bore her some results. It only took her three glances to understand that the famous James Potter actually really do like Severin, though the male might not understand it himself.

Just like that, the two people were occupied with their own thoughts, both of which involve the same girl. And just like that, the movie ended.

## Chapter 4

When Severin walked out of her college Monday and saw the familiar male sitting on a glittering black lacquer motorcycle, she wasn't even surprised anymore. It has already become a habit.

The actor raised his eyes and smiled, his arms crossed over his broad chest, in a short coat that showcased his muscles. She sighed to herself wearily and turned away, ignoring the gossip of the students around her.

Once again, she found herself being followed by him. However, this time he didn't ride his motorcycle or drive his car, just walking.

Despite her effort to maintain the distance, she could only curse his long legs as she rolled her eyes when he walked shoulder to shoulder with her.

James watched the ever so strange girl amusedly. But he pushed down the smile creeping up his lips as he said, "You set me up yesterday."

Severin shrugged, "You demanded it." She said nervously.

James shook his head, "I just wanted to meet you. Unless you feel we are close enough to meet your friends already?" He leaned toward her and winked, smiling as her face wore a red blush. He was aware of the closeness between them, he could smell the lavender scent of her hair. "What's next? Today we're going to get to know your family?"

The change was immediately, Severin turned away from him with narrow eyes and returned to walk quietly, ignoring his presence.

'Oh no.' He blinked and quickly changed the topic, "So... Another date?" He asked while hitching one of his eyebrows up.

"With you, I mean. Not with Lily or any other people. Just you." He continued with his eyes locked to her face.

She froze slightly before unnaturally continuing to walk. She blatantly avoided his gaze, "Lily told me about the date."

"Really?" James asked with a smile.

Severin nodded. "I think you're a great couple. If you just lower your ego, you'll be great for Lily."

"What? Where did it suddenly come from?" James looks really lost.

"You guys are just right for each other." Severin shrugged and smirked. "You are pretty, not disparaging each other, and without disgust for crazy superstars. Does that make it clear?"

James raised an eyebrow, "So I'm pretty in your eyes?"

Severin rolled her eyes. Of course that's the only thing the idiot will hear.

James took her response as a yes and beamed. He then added, "You are also very pretty."

That sentence made Severin halt her steps for the third time as she blushed, who knows from embarrassment or anger. She faked her calmness and responded, "Yeah, right."

They continued to walk to a point where Severin realized something and asked, "...Wait, how long do you intend to follow me?"

James laughed, "Well, it's actually pretty much up to you." He ran his hand through his hair and ruffled it like a wild animal.

Severin crossed her arms and raised her chin, absolutely not impressed.

James came up to her and held her hand, "Severin, you're very special, I've never felt in the past like I feel with you, please just say yes to one date. You'll see how much you'll love it." He slowly reached for her face, but Severin pulled away immediately.

"Nice try, Potter." She didn't even try to disguise the contempt in her voice. "How many girls have already fallen into this trap?"

James laughed a little, "Actually, everyone." He said shamelessly.

"But not you, I guess?" He added while inserting both of his hands to his pocket.

Severin ignored him and decided to go back to the previous question, "Since it's up to me, then stop following me." By now, the distance to her house is just several turns away.

He had already known her school address, and she has no intention to leak her house address too.

The young celebrity made no gesture that he'd hear her words.

Just a few days ago, he had no time to wait in line, and now he's ready to spend hours aimlessly?

Severin shook her head and exhaled nervously. "You can't just ignore what you're told. Don't you have better things to do than chase me every day?"

"Not really? I made sure to tell my manager to empty my afternoon." He shrugged his shoulder before turning to her and continued with a wry smile.

"And even if there is work, I think this," he gestured to both of them, "is more important, so no, I don't have better things to do."

He sounds so determined. She wouldn't lie that she almost felt apologetic. Almost because he just had to tease her afterwards, "Aww, are you worried about me?"

Severin pushed him, "You wish."

She was getting frustrated, how could she get rid of him? An idea came up in her head, "You know the press will celebrate, right? 'James Potter with an unfamiliar girl', your fangirls will be sad, your manager will not be happy neither and your reputation may plummet."

"That's a bit too late to worry about. The press has already gotten some good pics of you." He tapped his phone and showed her who was (luckily) using a hat at that time.

"But no. It turns out that my fans, such good people they are, have gotten used to my popular lifestyle." He chuckled at that.

Severin narrowed her eyes, "What do you want to say about that, Potter?" Demanded to know. The

last thing she needed was crazy fans to start fighting with her for a guy she didn't even want.

She had enough in college today, when some students decided to flood her with questions about the star who is always waiting for her after the lessons. For an introvert person like her, that was unbear.

"My reputation won't take a blow, and no fans will fight you?" He answered as if it's something obvious. He admit that he's slightly confused by her.. Over(?)reaction. Doesn't she want to be popular?

Severin let out an irritated scoff as she stormed off, "Just... Don't follow me!" She said through her gritted teeth. She has wasted too much time talking to him. She should have been home 5 minutes ago.

But as expected, the guy didn't respond, nothing new really. She wasn't going to let him get close to her house, so made a reverse, she change her way to the nearby small shopping center, lamenting this lost time that she would have to stay up at night and complete the tasks so as not to fail the lessons.

"Almost four already," Potter broke the tense silence created between them. "What do you say about lunch?"

Seeing the disbelief in her eyes, he shrugged and added, "We haven't had our lunch yet. Or some tea maybe? The last time we were interrupted after all." This time, he made sure to wear a mask wherever he go.

She frowned, "No." She had forgotten his existence because she was too engrossed with the shopping. Now that she thinks about it, she should have lose him in the crowd.

She tried to mingle among the people, but the guy didn't even step away, on the contrary, it just seemed to her, or did he take advantage of the situation to seep into her personal space?

"Potter!" She growled, moving away from him a little as she felt his solid chest cling to her back, only to be pushed off immediately by an excited and crazy girl.

"James Potter!!!" Shrieked in high tones that hurt Severin's eardrums. A crowd began to gather around, and the camera flashes from everywhere.

Severin felt a headache coming. In fact, she also felt a slight claustrophobia and a deep soul in an attempt to calm herself, as a flood of questions was analyzed.

She tried to squeeze out of the crowd, but there was no way out. More and more people surrounded them, she noticed. She squeezed her eyes tight in an attempt to blink away the uneasiness.

James noted the girl in front of him suddenly stilled. He expected some scoldings to be honest so the reaction surprised him. Worry filled his mind as he bent down slightly to check on her. He widened his eyes at her pallid skin. Her body was stretched taut as she tensed.

He cursed before circling one of his arm around her shoulder, hugging her against him in an attempt to cover her face. Although he didn't mind, their earlier conversation showed him that she mind.

The security has been alerted so it was easier for them to slip away now, as the crowd had been held off slightly. He took the chance and quickly brought her to a more discreet area before letting her go to let her take a breather.

Rubbing the back of his neck, he slowly, and apologetically, called out, "Sev? Are you okay?" The girl was probably still in shock as she had not said anything so he decided to call out her name in an attempt to snap her out of her stupor.

Severin leaned against his chest and took short, bursting breaths. The sweet adicolon smell penetrated her nostrils and turned her attention and thoughts. Slowly, she began to calm down as her mind took note of the soothing circles that James rubbed on her back.

Once she understood their stance, she straightened up, ignoring the slight grief of missing the heat of his body.

Fortunately, James did not click on her and did not try to destroy everything with another flirty note. To be honest, he seems a little worried and... guilty? Severin found this rare look endearing, and a small smile appeared on her face, before she caught herself and erased the smile.

James didn't catch her expression (fortunately for Severin). He was too focused on the loss he felt when she moved away. His hands wavered awkwardly in the air as an effort to hug her but he stopped himself.

He had already made mistakes and had no intention to make it worse after all. Right now, he's very worried that Severin will really avoid him.

If she did, then what will he do? A question popped in his head. He thought about it, trying to find answers before slumping in defeat.

There's nothing he can do.

James closed his eyes for a moment, he still had a mission and was not allowed to give up. It was a touch away... Oh, come on, he even hugged her. That's it, he just didn't try right.

He opened his eyes and looked at the pale female, but Severin didn't look back. Her black eyes were fixed on her cracked little wristwatch.

She turned, "I have to go."

James straightened up, "I'll accompany y—"

"No need." She interrupted him before he could finish.

She began to walk away, for a tiny second, she stopped and her head partially turned toward him. "Thanks." She exhaled hastily and left.



## Chapter 5

Thinking about yesterday's conversation about James' fans, Severin can only blame herself for the jinx. She sighed before lifting her head to stare at the group of angry females in front of her.

The class had just ended when she was called by a student who told her that a teacher asked her to take care of the lab. She should have known that it was a trap and said yes to Lily's offer in accompanying her.

She was just a few steps from the lab building before some girls called her out for a 'short talk', which she translates as an 'interrogation'.

And that's how she ended with lots of girls surrounding her. She didn't recognize most of them, but the one she did were the people of James' fan club. One senior stood at the front of the group with her eyes scanning Severin from head to toe, "I never knew James' taste could be so bad." She said distastefully.

Another girl to wrinkled her nose and mock. "Too bad, such a perfect guy with a terrible taste." The hummock agreed.

Severin didn't respond, but righteous rage began to build up inside her. It was so unfair. What did she do to make her life such a mess?

"Did he do such charity with such an inferior girl? So poor and not to mention how ugly she is, she has nothing to offer." More fans joined in the mockery.

Severin ran her fists clenching her teeth, it wouldn't respond, she was at a disadvantage. But how she wanted to respond. A cynical note stood on the edge of her tongue and required all her endurance to bite it back.

The first girl squealed. "He had to choose me!"

"Luckily, he didn't." She whispered loudly before clamping her lips. There she goes, it slipped out of her mouth. She hoped that they didn't hear her words.

They did.

"What?" The girl's tone suddenly heightened to a shrill, which made Severin cringe. Her eyes narrowed murderously at Severin, "What did you just say?"

Well, okay. Severin straightened up and looked straight into the girl's blue eyes. "Apparently the guy is not lost in common sense. Maybe he just prefers a brain, rather than an outside appearance." She said evenly, the angle of her lip only slightly inclined.

The girls screamed, whether from a personal offense or from the superstar one.

"How dare you hint at me!" The blonde's red face seemed to explode. Another shouted insults, two girls stood frozen. "She. Didn't. Just. Say. James. Potter. Was. Stupid."

Severin shrugged, "It turns out not quite." She couldn't really say anything else, because the girls

blew up, abandoned their pride and just pounced on her with blows, shouts and hair tugs.

She tried blocking the attacks and was proud enough for being able to throw some punches in too. But they were too many, she was certainly on the losing ground. She can only hope someone passed by and alerted the teachers or the security.

She tried fighting back for what feels like a quarter hour. Her muscles screamed for her to stop while the scratches and bruises stung.

“Sev!” A familiar voice sounded as the crowd froze in their actions. They turned around to see the figure of two people. One being James and the other Lily.

James was already waiting by the gate, sometimes glancing about just in case Sev ditched him. But she was not there even after half an hour has passed, which is weird because she’s usually very punctual.

Lily was there though, so he quickly waved his arm to make her notice him. She did and walked to him, “James? Are you waiting for Sev?”

He chuckled, “Yes. Did you see her?”

Lily frowned and shook her head, “We parted ways because she was called by the Chemistry teach-“ Her words stopped because she just saw the said teacher walking past her.

She approached him, “Sorry, Mister Slughorn, where’s Severin?”

The man looked at her with confusion and scratched his mustache, “I haven’t seen her since the lesson you left together.” He said in a hoarse voice. “And I also suggest you leave, Miss Evans, soon locks here.”

“What?” Lily looked at the teacher swinging for a moment, then turned her gaze to James and then to the school doors. Her eyes widened and she cursed under her breath, “Sev!”

She started running. James caught up to her a moment later, keeping up her pace with no difficulty, “What happened?”

Lily gasped, “These girls! They must have delayed her on purpose...” James raised an eyebrow in silent wonder and Lily made it clear, “You can’t imagine the rage and revenge of a frustrated girl. I can’t believe I let that happen!”

“Sev said that Mr.Slughorn called her, so she should be at the chemistry lab... or somewhere close by.”

True to her words, they heard noises as they came close to the lab. James widened his eyes at the chaotic scene while Lily shouted, “Sev!”

They managed to attract their attention. The raging females stared at James in disbelief as they scrambled off Severin. They tried to tidy themselves as much as possible to which he and Lily took the chance to help Severin out.

She was in quite a poor condition. Her hair was tousled, clothes messy, while nails left bloody marks on her pale skin. There were also bruises forming ever so slowly.

James tried to approach the battered girl and measure the damage, but Severin glared at him and turned away from him. Lily met his eyes and hinted at the girls behind him.

James turned to them, a hard look in his eyes. "Girls, what is that supposed to mean?"

The girls, who miraculously managed to fix themselves and fix their makeup, and actually showed no sign of what had transpired a moment earlier, experienced cancellation movements.

"What does it matter? She's just a dirty lower-class fool, you could actually do a much better!" One completed her lipstick smear and clenched her lips with a kissing motion, while another blinked towards him with her mascara-covered eyes.

James ignored the gestures and turned to a girl who spoke, "While I appreciate your positive opinion of me, I do not want to do better, I chose Severin and I do not want to replace her. And your act was inappropriate and disrespectful at all."

The girls gaped in disbelief. James merely glanced at them, trying to reign in his anger. He knew that being angry is not the way to solve this so he can only sigh as he said, "Severin is a very close friend," and crush, "of mine. I'd really mind if something like this was to happen again."

The girls strangely calmed down, and even got the nerve to look guilty. Severin noted the change with sharp eyes while Lily helped her up.

She blinked at how fast James could actually coax them. If she had said those words, she would have gotten out worse.

Then again, she can not help but widen her eyes at the anger he showed to the girls. He does know that by saying that, he's risking his reputation, no?

She shook her head, she wouldn't actually give a single act of kindness and humanity to make her believe that the guy really was care. Anyone with a drop of morals would try to stop an event as such.

She stood stiffly, before turning around and moving away, taking careful measures to avoid her strong desire to escape.

James made a move to follow her, but Lily shook her head. "Let me deal with that." She murmured quietly.

With a quiet nod, she rushed to get her best friend. "Sev, how are you?" Severin murmured something annoyed.

"Are you injured?" Lily pressed.

"No." Replied the brunette girl without elaborating.

"So what happened?"

Severin did not respond.

Lily paused, hands on her hips, "Severin Snape, answer me!"

"They provoked me so I retaliated." The other answered curtly, not wanting to pursue the matter.

The red haired female scoffed, "I know you. You wouldn't have chosen to fight if you could escape. So you better tell me what they said if you don't want me to go back there and ask that blonde."

Snape huffed with amusement, before hissing when she accidentally touched her bruise. She stayed

silent for a while and when Lily was about to give up, answered, "Well.. it was just the usual mockeries. Being poor and ugly is a sin nowadays."

The anger in Lily's face was transparent, making her feel bad for lying. Those words actually did not hurt her as much because she heard them often enough.

She just does not want to admit that she was insulted when they said James was giving her alms.

Not even mention, she didn't ask for it at all.

"I really understand you and these girls got some decent blows." Lily grabbed her friend's hand and nailed it, squeezing a small smile.

"But James didn't." She continued. "He just wanted to help, and he was ready to ruin his reputation for it and lose fans who make his jackpot." Severin rolled her eyes, but Lily didn't let go. "He protected you." She said abruptly. "He protected you, Sev. He cares, don't you see he's really trying?"

"Why are you defending him so much?" Severin eyed her suspiciously.

This time, it was Lily's turn to roll her eyes, "I'm not defending him, I just don't want you to regret it when the time comes."

Severin was about to refute when Lily gave her her puppy eyes, "Give him a chance, okay?"

"Don't give me that look." Severin said. She can never refuse Lily when she does that. But Lily continued to eye her until Severin groaned and sighed, "Okay, I'll listen to you."

Lily's face changed suddenly to her delight. "Yes! I'll hold you to that!" She cried triumphantly, grabbing Severin's arm and dragging her to the gate.

Severin moaned, she didn't mean to now! Lily and her crazy ideas!

James waited patiently for both girls, as soon as he saw them approaching he smiled. "Severin, I'm really sorry for what happened there," he looked into the dark Onyx eyes, "I really didn't imagine anything like that could happen."

"Obviously not, Potter..." Severin murmured, groaning as Lily elbowed her in the ribs. "Okay, fine!" She called to the redhead and turned to the guy, "Okay, Potter. One date and after that you stop driving me crazy."

James blinked at her words before glancing at Lily who mouthed, "You owe me one." He turned back to Sev and saw the red on the tip of her ears as he chuckled, "I can't promise you the latter though."

He grinned like an idiot, not caring to hide the happiness that was basically spilling from his eyes.

Severin noted that and furrowed her brows but then she suddenly remembered her part time job as she widened her eyes.

"Shoot, I'm going to be late." She hissed after checking her watch. Lily glanced at her before shouting, "Today's your shift, isn't it? You won't get there on time! James, can you drive her there?"

Severin stifled a moan. Lily.

James opened the passenger seat gal for her and smiled gallantly, making sure to show as many gentlemen as possible. Severin rolled her eyes.

"Stop it," Lily hissed, "if you keep rolling your eyes like this, you'll get stuck and squint." Severin quietly grumbled and got into the car. "Well, have fun!" Exclaimed Lily.

"Wait, you didn't come too?"

Lily shook her head immediately, "No, no. I'll walk around here a little bit, you know, breathing fresh air and everything..."

"Lily!" Hissed Severin, but the redhead just laughed and walked away.

The ride was quiet, and before they could break the silence, they had already arrived at her house.

"Thanks." Severin briefly admitted, "See you this weekend."

"Wait, I'll wait for you here to get organized and drive you to work too." Suggested James.

Severin shook her head. Enough that he already knew the address of her school and now that of her home as well. She doesn't want to give him another place to chase her. "I'll be fine."

"But—"

"Potter. Do you still want the date?" With his hasty nod, she continued, "So leave me alone until then."

James laughed, "Okay, princess." He blew her a kiss in the air before he left, leaving another girl embarrassed behind him.



## Chapter 6

"Another date promise with the gal?" Sirius asked boredly, "Are you sure you won't get stood up again? Though it would be funny if you did." He guffawed afterwards.

James groaned, wanting to knock the memory out of Sirius's head. He had not intended for his friend to know about the failed date, but the latter found out anyway because of the news.

"She promised me this time. Gotta trust her, I guess?" James said, trying to convince himself too. He hoped that Severus won't be so cruel to ditch him again or even hook him up with some other girls when all he wanted was a date with her.

"You know, that's kinda hypocritical on your part." Sirius stretched. "You don't have to look so miserable, especially when all you're doing here is a challenge to conquer her and not miss any girl."

James ran his hand through his hair, "I know. But I want everything to go smoothly, I want her to understand that I'm the perfect guy. She was supposed to understand it from the beginning."

"Pride is injured?" Sirius smirked, "So once in a while, not everything goes exactly as James Potter the Great want." He folded with laughter as James stuck a sharp elbow to his stomach. "You take the challenge too personally, you know. I just hope that after that you break up with her, it won't be too hard and will cause the press to announce that you are playing games."

James laughed, "Don't worry. I'm gentle in its entirety. Everything will be perfect."

Sirius stared at him suspiciously before returning his gaze to his phone, "Well, Good luck."

James did not respond. His mind wandered around Sirius's words. Would he break up with her if they ever date? He shook his head, they're not even dating yet. He was so sure that he could get her, but now? Not really.

Meanwhile, Lily rummaged through her wardrobes, "Try this, this and this." She threw three pieces of articles to Severin, who struggled to catch them.

"Why am I here again? I thought you wanted some help with your lesson?" Severin asked.

"That's because you, a 19 years old girl, actually only had T-shirts in your wardrobe!" Lily glanced at her before continuing to dig through some chests, "And you can't use a T-shirt to meet the James Potter!"

Severin sighed as she folded the clothes and left them by the bedside. Lily frowned and eyed her. The black haired female only frowned, "Those clothes don't suit me."

Her friend sighed exasperatedly, "You haven't even tried it yet!" She took a step closer to Severin, who took a step back.

"Se-ve-rin." Lily emphasized each syllable separately, "You measure those clothes right away, do you hear me?"

Severin folded her hands, "Lily, that's not my style." She argued.

Lily imitated the movement and stared at her, "You never tried it so you can't know."

"I do not like it."

"Then give it a chance."

"I already gave James a chance because of you." Serene grunted and stared at her.

Lily smiled sweetly. "I know and I really appreciate you for that."

"Don't you think that's enough?"

"No."

Severin sighed in frustration.

"Come on, Sev, just try it, you can judge it after."

She glanced at the clothes and cringed. Lily's clothes are always the frilly cutesy styles, colored in bright colors. They are the complete opposite of what she would wear.

She begrudgingly took a clothing that looks slightly compatible to her before trudging to the restroom. Just before she entered, she eyed Lily and warned, "If it's not suitable, I'm taking it off right away."

Lily giggled and shooed her, "Just try it first. It's not that bad." As long as Severin tried one, it'll be easier to tell her to try her second, third and so on.

A grin tugged on her lips as she thought of what hairstyles and make ups will suit her dearest friend.

Severin returned to the room, looking clearly uncomfortable. Her hands all shovel pulled the short skirt down slightly.

"Severin, leave it as it is." Commanded Lily. "The skirt should be that length."

Severin muttered quietly to herself and shook herself. "I'm not going in this."

"Okay, so try these." Lily already was ready and handed her two dresses, one a lilac with a flower print and the other a smooth green with a light green translucent fabric on the sleeves. Severin sighed, but knew better than to argue and went to try them too.

Lily looked at her with a critical eye.

Just before Severin entered the restroom again, Lily secretly took a picture of her side profile before sending it to James.

The male was changing for his photoshoot when the notification arrived. He cocked one of his eyebrows, "A sneak peek?" He mumbled curiously. He pressed the image before widening his eyes.

In that image, Severin, who usually doesn't show much of her skin, was wearing a short dress of red. It suited her very much, James noted as his heart beat quicker.

He saved the image and secretly set it as his wallpaper before sending a grateful thanks to Lily.

Lily smirked and quickly hid her phone as Severin returned in the next garment that forced her to measure.

Severin became increasingly frustrated. She had never been a typical girl in this whole matter of clothing or makeup, and as much as she had collaborated with Lily until now, she was getting tired.

Lily pushed another garment into her hands, "Come on." Spurred her.

Severin sighed, "Last one."

"But we haven't tested half yet!"

"No. That's enough." She had no more patience and the only thing she wanted was to go to bed and sleep. But no, she couldn't, because she had another important test she shouldn't neglect.

She sighed again and put on Lily's last choice, she had already stopped paying attention to the clothes she was wearing half an hour ago, just letting Lily choose what she wanted. She didn't go in those clothes anyway, and Lily knew that.

Lily waited with another dress, "Just another one!" She asked.

"No."

"Sev-"

"No."

"Well, then you have to choose one of everything you wore."

Severin grumbled, rubbing her tired eyes. She examined the pile of clothes, looking for the simplest and least noticeable.

In the end, she took the green dress, which she thinks the color is not too eye-catching.

Lily smiled as she helped tidy up the rest of the clothing and started taking out her make up sets. Severin widened her eyes in shock, "Wait, no. I don't have enough time to test them out. Got a test tomorrow."

"Awww, come on! It'll take a short time!" Lily cooed as she approached Severin, who firmly shook her head. She downcastedly put the sets down before asking, "Then, at least, your hair?"

"For what? Lily, calm down is just a single stupid date, I'm not getting ready for the wedding."

"Severin, you still have to show your best!" Lily scolded, "Besides, if things go well, it may be that a wedding is not a very unlikely event."

Severin looked at her annoyed and Lily laughed. "Seriously, Sev, you're such a weird girl." In response to the black eyebrow raised toward her, the redhead was quick to correct, "I mean, special, special girl."

Severin snorted, "Okay, so let someone special like me get along alone. The dress is definitely enough." And it was.

"Obviously," Lily rolled her eyes, "we don't want our star to think you dressed up in his honor, God forbid, right?"

"Anyway, good luck for the date tomorrow!" Lily finally let her go as Severin packed her things and stuffed the folded dress inside her bag.

Severin scowled at her words, which gained her a giggle from Lily. Both of them stepped out from the room as Lily was to see her out.

Lily's mother offered her to stay for dinner, which she couldn't refuse after the third persuasion. Severin stared at the warm atmosphere and shook her head when she thought of hers.

She's very lucky to have a friend like Lily. But she does admit that she's a tad bit jealous of the perfect family she had.

Severin stared at her food plate, roast chicken. How long has it been since she had it last time? Nearly a month, if she's not mistaken, once again Lily's parents invited her to stay.

She closed her eyes and breathed the alluring aroma, it was a reminder of why she shouldn't waste her time on boys and other nonsense.

The perfect dream was to find a home with a lab that could experiment with chemistry and discover new discoveries. Of course, that was a long way off. She was too realistic to make any illusions. But at the very least, she hoped that next year, she could already live in her own apartment.

"Severin? Is the food not to your liking?" Lily's mother asked worriedly. Severin jerked her head up in surprise before answering, "No, it's very delicious, thank you for the food." She replied while picking up her fork.

The older woman smiled in relief when she saw Severin ate a few mouthfuls. The child has been too thin if compared to her own, so she could not help but worry. It did not help that Severin's family is not on the brighter side when it comes to caring for children.

They finished the dinner rather quickly. And after washing her plates (she insisted), Severin walked to her house. The sky's already dark but because her house is pretty close to Lily's, the Evans were not too worried to let her go alone after she refused the offer to drive her.

Today is one of the rare days where her father is not home, drunk. But he's not any better since he's out gambling away whatever little money her mother had scrapped. Her mother was in the living room, sweeping the broken glass while carefully avoiding the suspicious liquid littering the ground.

She looked gaunt and pale. But Severin's glad that there's no new bruises forming. Her mother saw her and heaved a relieved sigh, "You're home."

Severin nodded slightly, reserved. Most of the time she didn't know how to treat her mother. Well, most of the time her mother was just present and not really there. She knew it was neglect, and it kind of pinched her heart, but Severin would have been happy to live with such neglect from both parents, if that was all it took.

Severin felt sorry for the woman, but she had nothing to do with it, and when she was much younger and asked why she didn't leave the drunken man, she replied that she love him.

"Love requires sacrifices." Her mother stared out the window and little Severin just blinked incomprehensibly.

And she still didn't understand. She didn't believe in love. Probably for the better.

Severin lowered her black eyes to the bag with the green dress, and wondered, not for the first time, if she was doing the right thing.

She sighed quietly, well... one meeting wouldn't kill her.



## Chapter 7

James glanced at his watch and noted that he's early by five minutes. He remembered the last 'date' and chuckled nervously, hoping that Severin will at least have some conscience this time.

They decided to meet up at 6, Lily forcing Severin to agree for the dinner. James can swear that Lily's really their cupid when this whole thing works out. When, not if. He didn't know why, but he didn't like the thought of them not being together.

Right at 6pm, the figure of a black haired female entered his view. She was wearing a short sleeved green dress, which stopped at around her ankle. It's really rare for her to expose that much skin, showing that at least she gave some effort (though he knew it was partly Lily's). so he was grinning stupidly when she arrived.

Severin scowled at his expression and somehow regretted her decision on listening to Lily. He smiled and praised her, "You look very pretty."

Despite her desire, Blush rose into Severin's cheek. She felt quite awkward about Lily's sarafan, much favoring her simple, shapeless pants. All this tight style... she felt too revealing.

Still, she would never admit it, especially to Potter of all people, but it was nice to hear the compliment and feel a little beautiful for a change.

James smiled openly at her and Severin lowered her head, trying to hide behind her hair curtain, which was unsuccessful this time, because Lily was even able to convince her to do something with her hair, it was not a hairstyle, but the pins Lily had pushed into her hair were way beyond normal.

Her face scrunched when she thought of the sufferings she went through just for a date she promised out of impulse. James saw her expression and chuckled, "Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go?"

He naturally held out his hand for her, which she refused. He crestfallenly lowered his arm, "Uh.. At least hold on to me? In case you got lost?"

Severin hesitated before reaching out her hands, "Only the little finger." Her heart skipped a beat when she saw him brightly beam at her.

She didn't really have to expect anything else, James led her to the most expensive restaurant she had ever seen. Severin watched the mesmerizing giant chandeliers hanging from the high ceiling and illuminated everything in a romantic light as James grabbed a leather armchair and waited for her to sit down.

The seat was amazingly comfortable and her thoughts wandered around the development until Severin almost missed the waitress who came to take their orders.

The girl blushed awkwardly as James executed their orders and ordered wine. The drink came with tall, elegant goblets placed in front of each and the bottle was delivered to James standing and pouring into each.

The girl now watching the red liquid fill up quietly, she forgot to tell him she wasn't drinking. In fact, she shook her head a little, paused, she didn't want to tell him.

She doesn't want him to know that her family is leaning to the broken ones, alcoholism more often than not a norm. While it does irks her if other people were to know (which they do know since her father is not so low key with his problems), she wouldn't know what to do if it was James.

At best, he would be just like everyone else except Lily, avoiding her like she's some sort of plague. Or at worst, he would pity her. She doesn't want pity.

James stared at her with his arms on the table. She looks like she wanted to tell him something when he poured both of them a drink, so he assumed she wanted to tell him she didn't drink. But she didn't say anything and now, she looks very conflicted, her eyebrows slightly knitted.

He watched her for a full half minute before deciding to break her stupor, "...I forgot to ask. Do you drink? Because if you didn't, you can order something else?" His tone was tender as he asked slowly.

Severin was silent, her eyes fixed on her glass and not meeting his gaze.

James cocked his head. "Severin?" He asked quietly. Unanswered, he reached over the table and placed it on the small white hand, the action causing Severin to wake up.

She immediately pulled her hand back, "Just water." murmured. Her gaze lowers her hands she has now placed on her thighs.

James sighed inwardly, why didn't it go the way he had hoped for her? He signaled to the waitress and soon a glass of cold water was placed in front of the dark-haired girl.

James strained his mind in search of a way to get this date back on track and being less awkward and uncomfortable.

It didn't take him long to find a topic. He smiled and then said, "Lily told me that you dressed up for the date?" He asked teasingly. He knew that he's digging a grave for Lily, but he can only send a prayer to the girl and maybe, a grateful basket of fruits later.

As he expected, Severin's head whipped up as her eyes widened in surprise. Her cheek was red, who knows from embarrassment or anger, as she stuttered, "L-Lily forced me to!"

For the first time, Severin stuttered, that's some feat he managed to achieve. He continued the conversation, "Then I guess I should be thankful to her. But I'm still happy you dressed up though."

He enjoyed seeing Severin scamper for a retort but in the end, he took a pity on her and changed the topic, "Have you two been friends since young?"

Severin must be eager for the change as she quickly nodded, "Yes. We got the same interest in chemistry." The light hearted talk continued until the food came, and the atmosphere had eased by quite a lot.

James was happy that the date is going quite smoothly, although Severin mostly talked about Lily. But what can he say? Severin doesn't seem eager to share about herself and Lily is their only common topic.

"You seem to spend a lot of time with Lily's family." James commented at some point. He studied his dish and was surprised when he encountered a silence afterwards.

He looked up and noticed Severin's nervousness, the girl staring hostile at the food.

"Sev?" When the obsidian met the hazel, he quietly added, "Are you okay?"

Severin shrugged slightly, unconsciously. "Not enough as I would have liked." She grumbled quietly.

James was silent, waiting and hoping the girl would continue.

"I don't know what you're hoping to hear, Potter." Severin rolled her eyes, "I'd just rather spend the time with Lily."

"I'm sure Lily's family is amazing," James agreed, "yet, I'd like to meet your family."

Severin snorted, "Believe me you're not."

James raised a dark eyebrow. "And why so?"

She bit her lips and hesitated before sighing, "Let's just say.. they are not so good in parenting."

James stayed quiet. He wanted to deny her statement as he thought Severin is the best girl he has ever met. Not the kindest, but maybe, a person who's true to herself. He smiled thinly and mischievously said, "Still, I need their approval in the face of law."

Severin blinked, not completely understanding what he meant. What when she did, a faint blush climbed up her cheeks. She lowered her head and grudgingly muttered, "Yeah, right."

They quickly finished up their dinner. Knowing that Severin most likely will want to pay for herself, he quickly slipped the bill to the waitress before facing Severin's scrutinizing eyes.

He smiled guiltlessly, "I'll let you pay for the movie?"

She sighed and relented, nodding her head.

The date went more smoothly after that. Severin was even surprised by the speed that time passed, she felt dizzy from the tension she had released.

James fully embodied the role of the knight on the white horse, or on the limo, in this case. The guy avoided narcissistic comments and Severin was stunned by the amount of understanding he demonstrated.

She never thought she would tell what was happening in her house to a stranger other than Lily, but somehow she found reveal of herself more than she want. It was scary, though liberating...

James was so different from what she had thought of him until now.

"Potter, I can send myself home." She desperately and irritably said.

James gestured to the dark sky, "I can not send a girl on her way alone when it's this dark." Furthermore so for a girl he's courting. He added silently.

They have been going at this for 15 minutes. But neither sides is willing to give up.

Severin visibly frowned before she sighed, "Fine. Just until a couple houses away though." She understood that he wouldn't relent and gave up. In her heart, she feels a little bit, just a little bit, warm.

James beamed brightly and nodded, "Deal."

James kept his promise.

As soon as Severin ordered him to stop, he did. Elegance and chivalry of course. He kissed beside her and gave a toothy smile, "I had an amazing evening. Thank you so much for agreeing to go out with me."

Severin rejoiced in the darkness that prevailed, which hid the redness in her face. "It's nothing..." she murmured.

James shook his head, "It's all."

He leaned slowly toward her, but when they separated only a few inches, Severin pulled away, her face warm and frightened. "See you later." She murmured in a shaky voice and fled toward her home.

Before turning to the last turn she turned threw a look back for a moment, James was still standing there, shrouded in shadow, looking at her.

## Chapter 8

Severin noticed all the strange looks and hushed whispers she has been getting as she walked down the halls. She assumed it was because the clash she had with the fangirls and took a breath before squaring her shoulders, trying to toughen herself.

It did not take long for her to notice that her assumption was wrong because she managed to hear the hushed words.

"She's the one dating the celebrity.."

"Yesterday.."

".. Saw her in the restaurant.."

Okay, things are getting stranger. As if on cue, Lily arrived and pulled her to a discreet spot hurriedly.

"Sev.. You should calm down." Lily said, while pulling out her phone and tapping the screen. She had expected that Severin must have not checked the news.

Severin furrowed her brows, "What do you mean?" Lily looked.. partially guilty.

Lily took a breath and showed her the screen of her phone. Severin squinted her eyes before widening them as she snatched the phone, "..What is this??" She half shouted.

The screen showed a spectacular shot of her eating with James, the latter smiling as he stared at her. It might have been because of the lighting, but she looked like she was blushing there.

Her eyes skimmed the news, finding that it had not mentioned her names and called her the "the mystery girl". But it will not take long until everyone will find out her identity, proven by the pace in which the students around her knew it was her.

Lily looked up and shifted her feet as she slowly said, "It seems that the media found out?"

Severin hissed a sarcasm, "Yeah, thanks, as if I didn't know that."

"Oh, come on. It should not be that bad.. right?" Lily sneaked a look at Severin's expression and muttered, "Or maybe not." She was somehow happy though, that Snape does not seem to react too badly. Angry and shocked, yes, but definitely not all panicked and livid. Maybe Snape is getting used to James?

Severin stood frozen, she didn't know how to respond. It was a big shock and it was unpleasant at all.

She didn't want to star in the news, she wanted her life to remain as private and personal as personal life should be. She exploded and told Lily all her thoughts about it.

Lily laughed, slightly nervously, putting a hand around her friend's shoulders, "Well, those are the disadvantages of being a celebrity's girlfriend." She said with a crooked smile.

Severin's face was immediately flooded with a bright red, "Lily!" She exclaimed in protest.

"But that's true, isn't it?" Severin shrugged awkwardly. To be honest, she herself wasn't sure.

"Well, the press already knows." Lily smirked, "Sign it is."

"But I really am not with him!" Severin exasperatedly said.

"Yet." Lily added with one eyebrow lifted teasingly.

Severin palmed her face and groaned, feeling a major headache coming. Her phone vibrated and she glanced down to see James' message popping on her screen.

Lily peeked in and smiled before stepping back, motioning Severin to open it. She knew that if she was there, Severin likely won't open the message out of awkwardness.

Severin sent her a glare and opened it, skimming the message.

'I'm so sorry about the news. I didn't pay attention enough. I'll fix the problem. So don't get angry.. please?'

It was obvious that the text was done in a fluster. She can almost imagine James' terrified expression and snorted, her anger calming down slightly.

Her heart flutter, just a little. It was awkwardly pleasant to see James taking care of her comfort.

"You see," Lily shoved an elbow into the girl's ribs. "Your prince cares for you."

Severin rolled her eyes, but couldn't hide the smile that gathered in front of her.

Lily smirked, "Admit it's romantic. You're like Cinderella."

Severin froze. Lily realized she had made a mistake and lowered her voice, "Sev?" Carefully asked.

"Cinderella? Because of the dysfunctional house?" Ask in frozen tone.

Lily pinched the bridge of her nose, "Sev, I didn't mean that—"

"I'm really not like Cinderella. I don't need a prince to save me, I'm very good at myself."

"I know."

"I'll get myself out of my trouble alone."

Lily grabbed her hands, "Sev. Severin. Look at me." When the black eyes stopped at her, she continued. "I know. You can. You are smart and talented and you can help yourself." She paused for a moment to let the impression sink, "But the one you can, doesn't mean you need. You don't have to deal with all this alone. Do you hear me?" She waited for a nod before continuing, "You don't have to go through all this alone. Some people care." She gestured at Severin's phone. After a quiet moment, Severin nodded again hesitantly.

Was she truly mistaken? Severin quietly thought to herself. She stared into Lily's eyes and finally allowed herself to relax slightly.

Maybe, just maybe, she can trust them. The concern they gave her was unfamiliar, but not unwelcome. It felt rather nice to know that she was not completely alone.

With that in mind, Severin huffed a laugh and muttered, "Sorry about that. I was overreacting and.. You're right. I'll trust him."

Her response made Lily beam in response, her green eyes bright. Seeing her so happy sent another surge of warmth as Severin couldn't resist a smile back.

"Okay, let's get back to class. Only the last lesson left after all." A neutral expression returned to her face as Severin said, making Lily roll her eyes, "Right, just when we're getting emotional."

Severin had turned her back, but Lily could catch a ghost of a smile on her face. It's a right decision to allow James in their little circle. She's sure that James will treasure Severin and treat her the best.

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"No, no, it's not good!" The voice of James's organizer was full of panic, "Okay, okay, calm down."

He walked back and forth in the locker room. James looked at him carefully, the first thing he thought of when he saw the news himself was Severin, the second of course was Tom, his organizer.

Tom was like a ticking bomb, he glanced again at his telephonic device he had placed on the dresser a moment earlier and shouted. "No! It wasn't in the agreement!" He flipped through the photos posted in the news. "It will destroy the reputation of the most coveted single in the country. It's no good, no no no..." He back to walk in the room, his boots making loud bangs in every movement.

"Someone not famous... a charity project? An attempt to integrate into the life of the poor?" He talked mostly to himself, but James's heart was missing a beat.

"No!" He stood up and shouted abruptly, shocking Tom until he jumped. James himself was surprised at his own reaction. Tom scowled at him, "What do you mean by no?"

James forced the foreign feelings out and smiled, "I mean, charities are too mainstreams these days so people won't trust that reason. Also, why would I suddenly integrate myself with the poor?"

He knew he was babbling nonsense. None of his reasons were factually correct. And that earned him narrowed eyes from Tom, who scanned him from head to toe. James smiled, trying to act as if nothing's wrong. Seeing that he couldn't force anything from him, Tom took off his eyes and reluctantly nodded, "Well, if you're that against it, we can think of another method."

Once again, he paced around the room, his brows slightly furrowed. James took the chance to check his phone for any replies. To his disappointment, there aren't any. But at the same time, he was relieved that Snape didn't just break off the relationship.

He wouldn't know what to do if that happened.

Tom muttered to himself, stopping from time to time to ponder some idea that popped into his mind, dismissing him and continuing to walk.

James watched him nervously. Next to him, Sirius stretched and yawned, "Why are you so tense?" He asked his friend. "You proved to yourself that no one could resist you. That's what you wanted, didn't you?"

"I guess... but I'm not comfortable with that..." James murmured, examining his fingers.

Sirius sat on the chair upside down and rested his hands on the back of the chair. "What is it,

conscience?" He smirked and punched his friend's shoulder, "Don't worry, it'll be okay."

James opened his mouth to reply but was interrupted by Tom's cry. He turned his eyes to the man with a satisfied expression on his face.

"That's it. That's the solution!" Tom looked at James, "A girlfriend. An official girlfriend. We'll have a TV interview where you'll show your new girlfriend."

"Ah..." James blinked tightly.

"It will save the reputation. It will spark a media storm... Yes, that's what we need." Tom stopped his vigorous speech and caressed an imaginary beard. "Mary McDonald? No, the girl is too loud. And gossip... um..."

Sirius grumbled, "My biggest mistake..."

James smirked.

Tom turned to Sirius and a sparkle came into his eyes. "Right, here it is. The perfect girl. Narcissa Black."



## Chapter 9

"Severin Snape?" An unfamiliar voice called her out. She turned around to see a black haired male right behind her chair.

Lily, who was sitting in front of her, asked, "Sev? You know Sirius Black?" Her tone was filled with surprise. Sirius was another star whose fame was about the same with James. Though, his reputation was not as good.

It was strange for Sev to know him, but maybe James had introduced them because he and Sirius are best friends. Lily thought until this point.

However, Severin's face had no trace of recognition as she turned back to her, "You know him?"

Lily had to held back her laugh when she saw the incredulous look on Sirius' face. She swallowed her smile and said, "He's James' best friend."

A look of understanding surfaced on her face as Severin nodded and turned back again to face him, but she didn't say anything and waited for him to continue.

Sirius pursed his lips. He was going to check out the girl James was so smitten with, to the point his friend even sacrificed his reputation.

James had fought with Tom because he also refused to make a rumor with Narcissa as a way to tackle the scandal. This was Sirius' first time to see his friend so.. so hell bent on something so he was kind of worried.

It's his whole carrier he's risking! From what he heard, the chasing was also only done by James, not mutually. What if this Severin is a gold digger?

Well, whatever, this girl totally confused James, it could have cost him his career and Sirius wouldn't let it happen.

Not because of a stupid challenge that goes too deep. Not by any means.

He had to put an end to it. Keep the weird girl away so his friend can return to the life of glory awaiting him.

"Can I talk to you alone?" He asked.

The girl kept a strand of black hair out of her eyes and stared thoughtfully at him. "Lily?" She asked the other girl.

The redhead sprang up, "I'll be right behind the door."

The male waited for the door to close before turning to Snape.

Severin crossed her arms, "Go on."

Sirius naturally took Lily's seat before he, with a pleasant smile, began, "James told me a lot about you."

One of her eyebrow shot up. Sirius thought the girl was interested to hear him continue and opened his mouth when Severin said, "Get to the point."

Her response made him froze before he leaned back and crossed his arms, "Fine. The reason I'm here is to tell you to get out of James' life. You are a bad news to his carrier."

"Honestly, how's that related to you?" Severin answered. She admitted his words hurt more than she thought but she's not going to show him a weakness.

Sirius let out an angry laugh and decided to just go hell with it, "Well, part of the reason James is chasing after you is because of my persuasion."

He watched her furrow her brows and continued, "James only chased after you because of a bet. A silly bet we made about two months ago."

His words sent her blood cold as she clenched her hands. Two months ago was their first meeting. If what he said was true..

"I don't believe you." She found herself saying.

Sirius knew that his goal was achieved, so he stood up and patted her shoulder, "Well, it's up to you to believe me or not. But James, he is dating my cousin at the moment. Don't ruin their time."

The last sentence somehow made him feel guilty. But it was necessary to completely cut all the roots and it's not like it's a complete lie anyway because the two were going to hold the press conference soon to announce the 'romance' between them.

The girl's poker face cracked, "Why? Why did you bet on me?" She ask.

Sirius smirked, "Just to prove to himself that even a girl who doesn't seem interested, in the end, will fall into his personal charm, and it worked. Don't take it to heart, not something personal against you, dear."

Severin's eyes filled with rage and her vision shone red. It was true, she knew it. His every word was correct. It was just a game for the superstar, what is the chance that someone like him would be interested in someone like her? Pain flashed inside her chest. She knew it and she fell into the trap.

She stood on shaky feet and pointed a finger at the door. "Go out." Her voice wasn't beyond a whisper, but the threat was heard in those few words.

She knows but she doesn't want to believe it. She doesn't want to believe that everything is fake.

Sirius did not linger any longer, and she's grateful because she doesn't think she won't cry any second now.

She quickly stood up and typed Lily that something came up so she needed to go. She quickly left the room, choking back on a sob.

She wanted to message James, wanted to ask if what Sirius said was true. Just when she took out her phone, James's voice sounded.

She turned around and noticed that a girl is watching a live press conference of him. Her face paled when she read the labels.

'The famous star's scandal is fake. The said star is dating with the rising star Narcissa Black.'

James confirmed the interviewers' questions, his hand circling around Narcissa's waists. The latter leaned delicately to his chest with a smile.

The sight hurt her because it basically confirmed everything Sirius said before, crushing the sliver of hope in her heart. She stood still before she let out a cold and desolate chuckle.

She should have known better than to trust anyone, should have known better than to fall in love with that liar. Now she's reaping what she sowed.

And that was her fault. She laughed bitterly and raised her palm to her eyes, they were moist. She commanded herself to stop acting like a fool, this arrogant creature was not worth to cry over him, but she couldn't hold back the tears.

It was a lie. All the damn time.

Why did she do it to herself? She took a shaky breath, trying to regain control of her emotions, wish she could have wiped out all this heartache.

Lily was wrong, her life was far from being a Cinderella story. The prince was a monster and her life was an endless nightmare.

She should have forgotten about him. Forget the lie he sold to her, forget about all the time she lost on him. She had to go back to focusing on real life and not chasing illusions. He could continue his extravagant and hypocritical stage life. She had to learn and achieve the profession she chose, to reach a real summit with purpose.

That is, she began to walk towards her home with determination, tomorrow she had a chemistry exam, and she would not fail.

James just finished the tiring conference. He quickly checked his phone, trying to see if Severin read his message. The conference was too sudden, he tried to fight for more time so he can explain the plan to Severin but Tom was adamant that it should be held as soon as possible.

To his disappointment, Severin did not read the message. He tried to convince himself it was because Severin rarely opened her phone when he noticed the spam calls from Lily.

Just when he was about to call back, his phone rang again with Lily as the caller. He picked it up and was about to greet her hello when Lily basically screamed to his ear,

"You bastard! Asshole! Fu-"

There were more profanities than James had ever heard before. In the end, he waited until she ran out of breath before he anxiously shouted, "I'm not dating Narcissa!"

"..What?"

"It was only a ploy so that Severin can escape from the public eyes! I'm really not with her!" James explained in a breath.

There was silence before Lily asked, "..Wait, then.. then what did Sirius Black come here for?"

This time, it was James who was stunned silent, "Siri.. came to meet you guys?"

Lily hummed uncertainly, "They talked for about five mins before he left. Sev left right after. She never ditched me like that, so I thought.. I thought Sirius told her about the news."

James took a deep breath, "Oh, my, it's not good."

"Really?" Lily said dryly.

"I have to talk to her before it gets worse!" Cried James.

The call broke off and the boy tried to get Severin on the phone. The messages all remained unanswered and the girl did not pick up the phone no matter how much he called. But James was nothing if not determined. At the end, he catch the home phone, "Severin," he breathed wide as she answered.

There was a tense silence on the line before the girl responded, "How did you get this number?" Finally she asked, her voice sounding hoarse and quiet, did she cry..?

"Lily gave me." Severin did not repent and James continued with concern, "I need to talk to you. What's in the news, that's not true. I'm not dating Narcissa, it's just a misunderstanding."

"Really? So wasn't it you who showed up with a beautiful blonde and declared to the whole world that you were dating?" The hoarse voice oozed sarcasm.

"No, yes, it's me, but I'm not really dating her... It's just a cover, so people will think it's the true... It's just on TV, we can still meet in secret..."

There was another silence and James feared the line was dead. "Severin?"

"So you're ashamed of me?"

"What, no—"

"You don't want people to find out about us. We can't even meet in public."

"Sev, it's just for the fans—"

"Exactly." James paused. "You live your life for fans. We cannot continue to be together, our world is too different and will never meet, go on with your life and let me continue on mine." The voice was determined and hard. "Please stop calling me, Potter, I'll answer no more." With that, the line has died.

## Chapter 10

It's been two weeks since they last talked, two weeks since she found out the truth. James no longer contacted her and things continued as if they have never met.

Except the fact that Lily keeps hesitating whenever his name came up after her failed first attempt in convincing Severin to hear him out. Like now, for instance.

Lily glanced at her again, before opening her mouth and then closing it again. Severin tried to ignore her for the first quarter hour but in the end, she sighed, "If it's about Potter, I'm not going to listen."

Lily flushed, not knowing that her peeking was found out. She huffed and said, "It's not only about him okay? It's also about you."

She continued without waiting for Severin's refute, "You are not doing good ever since the conference. I didn't say anything because you said it'll pass, but it's been two weeks! Two weeks of depression! Hell, Madam Pomfrey was almost shocked to death when she saw your pale face!"

Her tone lowered to words full of worry, "Sev, are you really doing okay? I mean, well.. things turned bad right after that but what I said at that time still stands. I care for you, Sev." And I really think you should talk to James. Lily added in her heart. But she knew better than to say it out.

It was hard enough to catch Sev's attention to hear her out. So she better be not digging her grave.

Sev stared at her with surprise before pursing her lips, "...I know. And I know that I'm not doing well these past days. Not everyone get betrayed that harshly, you know. And the recovery took longer than I thought." She smiled self deprecatingly.

Lily was about to answer when Sev packed her books, "I think I'll continue at home. See you." She made her way to the door. Lily sighed and kneaded her temple as she felt a headache coming.

It was much worse. Of course she was depressed. Lily just didn't understand.

Severin felt so lost. She wish it could just be erased from her life, the only thing that came out of it was grief... If it was love, Severin could really live without it forever. And why do people pursue this delusion..?

After that life just got complicated, she hated everything and felt so desperate. This guy came into her life just like that and drove over her, that was the clearly feeling, every little good thing in her life was destroyed.

She failed to focus on studying and failed the test that could have opened a door for the future she hoped for. She didn't pass. It failed. She was so stupid... She really hated everything.

What's left for her? She kept begging for another chance to take the test, but her motivation faded more and more, sometimes she didn't understand what even the point was...

"James? Are you listening?"

Narcissa's voice pulled him out of his stupor. He turned around and forced a smile on his face, "I'm sorry?"

Narcissa huffed before smiling and repeating the information. James nodded and gave perfunctory responses, just enough to keep the conversation over the table going.

They were having dinner in a restaurant just a few days after Narcissa asked him out for real and he agreed. He is starting to regret the decision though.

Don't take him wrong, Narcissa is a good person. She's everything the upper circle women wanted to be, elegant and poised. And that's why he thought he could love her.

But it did not go as he planned. He kept thinking of Severin every few minutes, distracting him from his work. His director scolded him five times before telling him to go rest. Even Tom is looking at him with strange eyes.

After that day, he went to see Sirius and asked him what the hell is going on. His friend responded with a short, "I told her the truth."

That explained enough of Sev's cold response. He had forgotten that everything was supposed to be for a bet. By the time he understood that, he also understood that he loves Severin for real.

It was ironic to understand that now, but Severin's presence in his life was exactly what he always needed and never knew about.

It was complicated, he knew it, but those two weeks were the longest and most depressing he had ever experienced. And he had only himself to blame. Well, Sirius was guilty, too, but he could be really angry with him, because if James was honest with himself, he was the one who dug that pit for his own.

Severin was right, he couldn't live in both worlds at the same time. He chose... and now he feels so empty.

He has dated so many girls before, and never felt it before... it was frustrating. Worst of all, he felt crushing and grief for made Severin go through it. But he didn't know how to fix it... He didn't know if he had the option at all.

Narcissa stared at the forlorn man in front of her and gently dabbed her lips with a handkerchief to hide a smile. She propped her chin with her hand as she leaned to the table, "James? The bill is here."

James jerked his head up and tried to apologize when Narcissa giggled, "It's okay." She watched James pay for the bill and then continued, "Love problems?"

Her question managed to make him choke on the wine, forcing the burning liquid down his throat. He did not stop coughing for the next five mins until his face was all red and he choked a response, "What? No!"

The blond rolled her eyes, "You don't need to lie. You have been looking like Andromeda when she was talking about Ted."

James went quiet for a while before beginning, "It's not about me. It's about a friend of mine." Narcissa had to stifle a giggle at that. This time, it was James who rolled his eyes, but he continued anyway.

He told her the shortened version about Sev and him. Narcissa paid attention and did not say anything until the very end when James asked, "What should I- my friend do?"

Narcissa nodded and then pondered for a while, "I think you-" His glare made her stop for a while and faked a cough, "-r friend should talk it out with the friend of your friend. That's where all the problem came, no?"

James was about to say something when she continued, "I do not know the extent of his feelings. But if he loves her more than anything, fame is almost a small price to pay, isn't it? And.. well, the people are not as closed off regarding relationships nowadays. So why not go for it?"

James bit his lip as he pondered her words.

Narcissa smiled pleasantly, "Well, I believe you should hurry to talk to your friend about it."

James looked at her cautiously, "Aren't you angry?"

Narcissa laughed with her bell laugh, "Why should I? I think it's such a wonderful feeling that so few find, it's a shame to miss it."

James felt strangely light, "Cissy, thank you." He whispered and hugged her before saying goodbye.

He really had to talk to Sirius, the guy owed him the help.

Sirius was stunned as he rolled the story and repeatedly asked if James was sure he love Snape.

"Why is it so hard to you to believe?" James exhaled in despair.

"I don't know, maybe because you're just so different... okay, okay, sorry, but do you really want to give it all up for her?"

"Yes." James looked at him seriously.

Looking at the earnest man in front of him, Sirius was silent for a moment before he sighed, "Is she that good?"

James smiled, "She is."

Sirius stared at his earnest eyes and gave up, "Fine. I'll help with the press but I can only delay it. This is bound to happen someday. And at that time, you are on your own."

James nodded. Sirius threw a glance at him and snapped, "Then what are you waiting for? Go chase after her." Sirius shooed him with one palm on his forehead.

With a laugh, his friend turned around and was about to leave when Sirius continued, "And James?"

James turned quizzically only to see Sirius awkwardly mumbled, "I'm sorry for telling her about the bet. Should have let you two talk about it."

James snorted but patted his shoulder, "No prob mate. It's a faulty bet to begin with. I wouldn't have been able to tell her and this," He gestured to the whole mess with irony, "still would have happened. It's just a matter of time."

Sirius chuckled, "I wish you luck."

## Chapter 11

Lily folded her hands and raised her eyebrows, unimpressed. "Again, why should I help you?"

James shrugged nervously, "Because... I want to fix everything?"

Lily stared at him. James raised his hands in a surrendering motion, "I'm sorry, really, I know I was an asshole... I just wish we could go back to being like before..."

"Say it to Severin." Lily said dryly.

"I tried," James admitted miserably, "she wouldn't listen, and she blocked my number..."

"And rightly." The redhead remarked firmly, "Do you really think she was stupid enough to trust you again? You don't know how hard it is for her, you just ruined her. You know her big dream shattered? She can't concentrate and study properly and she failed the last test. Severin. That never in her life has failed this lesson!"

James looked guilty at that but he knew this is his last chance as he tried again, "Give me another chance. I swear I won't hurt her. I.. At first it was just a bet, but I.. I really came to love her."

Lily stared at him scrutinizingly before her gaze softened. She knew Severin and James had to talk someday. And James giving in first was for the better because Severin is just too stubborn. It's his fault anyway.

She sighed once again before continuing, "I'll only help you meet her. If you dare hurt her again.." She narrowed her eyes and James nodded, "I won't."

"Saturday, 1 pm. At the cafe near the school. I.. I won't tell her you are the one she's meeting coz' she's not gonna come if she knew. So you better calm her down. This is your last chance." Lily warned.

She knew she's really risking her relationship with Sev. If things goes bad, she's sure Sev won't trust her anymore.

Time passed quickly. Long before the scheduled hour, James was waiting in the cafe. He swallowed nervously and repeated the thousandth time with the words he would utter when the girl appeared.

Exactly at one o'clock, Severin, as punctual as ever, opened the door. James noticed the messy black hair and stood, waiting for her to come close. The exact moment her dark eyes landed on his face, she turned and walked out the door without a word. James hurried to follow her.

"Severin, wait, please!" He shouted at her rapidly moving figure. Fortunately, he was an athletic and sportive guy, and managed to get around the girl in few minutes.

"I do not want to talk with you." The answer was brief and said in a frozen voice, the girl didn't even look in his direction.

"I know... I'm sorry!" James blurted out, "Severin, please, I just wanted to-"

"Keep your words. I'm not interested." She didn't let him to finish.

"I'm sorry! Please, please, give me another chance, just one! I know I don't deserve it, but I'll never



hurt you like that again. I hate the thought that I hurt you, I'm such an idiot... if only there was something I could do to fix that... "

"You're right, you don't deserve another chance." The firm voice interrupted his speech, "I don't trust you, Potter." For the first time Severin looked at him, and James noticed with a shock the dark circles under her eyes and absolutely tired face. "I don't want anything to do with you. I have a life to focus on."

James swallowed loudly, "I-I..."

"If you have a drop of respect for me, don't bother me again."

Wrong, wrong, so wrong...

James strained his mind to think of some answer, but couldn't even think of a single word. He looked at the retreat girl, his mind wandering to the last conversations with Narcissa, Sirius and Lily and their words echoed in his mind.

They were right. Severin was right. This was not the time to talk.

It was time to act.

## Chapter 12

“Severin, are you really okay?”

The question called her back from her thoughts as Severin turned to the speaker. A late aged woman and at the same time the owner of the restaurant she’s working at was looking at her worriedly.

Severin gave a nod, “Ah, yes. I’m fine.” The owner stared at her scrutinizingly before warmly saying, “If you got too tired, you can rest in the staff room. You have been working nonstop since a week ago, a bit of rest won’t hurt, no?”

Severin nodded again and thanked her. The owner turned and left, leaving her sighing as she washed the dishes.

Ever since that meeting, she has been avoiding Lily. She knew Lily did that for her sake but that does not mean she could just do that without Sev’s permission.

So to take her minds off these... relationship problems, she packed her schedules with works and studies, while researching of a way to retake her test.

There are ways, but they require more money than she could afford at the moment. And that made her head pound with another wave of headache.

Another blank look on her face, the owner finally put her on resting duties and sent her off to the staff room.

She was just desperate. Life seemed so tedious and lately she found herself wondering if she should just give up on her studies.

Maybe she just had to keep working until she could earn enough money for a small apartment somewhere away from everything. She could work a little so she could eat and in her spare time she would read books about distant worlds. It could have worked...

She was almost crying out of frustration, but her eyes stayed dry. She didn’t want to live like that, it was not the life she had worked so hard for...

A quiet ring of the clock alerted for another hour that passed and Severin knew that Lily would soon be coming for her shift.

She quickly packed her things, deciding to think of another way later. Her hands wavered when she was about to take her phone. She had turned the device’s do-not-disturb-mode on ever since that day, opting to use laptops or the school computers to do her works. And she doesn’t even have that many people she can contact so it was not hard to keep it off.

Except that today her phone has been sending her more and more notifications of calls and messages. She had dismissed it because the sender and callers name wavered between Lily and James, both people she doesn’t want to face yet.

She sighed and picked it up before stowing it inside her bag. She bid the owner a good night and was about to leave when a certain red haired girl stopped her.

“Sev! We have been trying to contact you!” Lily huffed.

Severin furrowed her brows slightly. Lily had been feeling awkward ever since she tried to set her up, but it does seem like the matter is urgent enough that she forgot about it. Thinking up to here, the black haired girl asked, “..Is it that urgent?”

“Yes! Well, no, but it is important!” Lily rambled.

“What is it?”

“James-” Lily began, Severin rolled her eyes.

Lily grabbed it and scolded her, “Severin, just listen. James want—”

Severin fatigued her forehead, “Enough, Lily, I don’t want to hear.” Something in her tone or defeat really silenced Lily. The redhead hesitated and then said in a much softer voice, “He’s really trying to fix, you know, he’s even—”

“Not everything can be fixed, Lily. I’m tired of it, I don’t want to think about him anymore.” She turned and began to walk towards her house.

“Everyone makes mistakes...” Lily remained standing looking at the defeated figure of her good friend.

Severin did not turn around when her reply sounded, “You pay for your mistakes. Just as I am experiencing.”

Lily was silent, and just as Severin walked around the corner, she heard Lily’s voice again. “Sev, just... don’t be angry. He’s really trying to help.” Severin walked away wondering what Lily’s last words meant. What is this guy planning now..?

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She packed her stuffs, heaving a sigh as she still had no answer to her questions.

“Miss Snape!” A voice called out. She turned around to see Mr.Slughorn stopping in front of her abruptly. His face was dotted with sweat, proof that he was running. He wiped the sweat as he panted, “Miss Snape, I assume that you haven’t heard the news?”

Snape furrowed her brows and was about to ask when the professor continued, “You have been given the chance to retest! Someone had donated a huge sum of money to the school in exchange for us to hold another test!”

She widened her eyes, disbelieved as her mouth gaped. She quickly stuttered, “A-Are you sure?”

“Of course! The headmaster had specifically told me to tell you!” Slughorn patted her back strongly, laughing, “Perhaps he knew that you would have done better given another chance?”

Severin did not register his words. Her head was too busy to process the sudden fortunate event.

A huge sum of money... It could just be Potter, right? There wasn’t anyone else who she knew that had huge sums to spend. But why did he do it? Is he trying to buy her trust with money?

But she had no time to think because the next thing she saw was the letter Slughorn had pushed into her hands, all her thoughts evaporating from her head as she looked at the seal on the envelope.

“Ilvermorny,” she reverently called the name of the most advanced chemistry academy with the

most educated scientists.

Severin couldn't believe, "T-this..."

Slughorn nodded, "It's come today, they heard about your achievements and would like to test you if you are fit to study in their academy."

Severin felt she was about to faint.

At first she had spared a thought that maybe someone rich is in the same situation as her and decided to make a retest. And she became one of the beneficiary. But this.. this is too uncanny to be another coincidence.

She did not know how her feet carried her out the school after the whole thing, too busy thinking.

Because she could not concentrate, she didn't see Lily walking in for her shift at work. The girl stopped in front of her and cleared her throat to get her attention, "..Congratulations, Sev!"

Severin looked up to see her face and nodded, her eyes slightly red. She then said, "Lily, I'm really confused at the moment." She needed someone to tell her what is going on.

"Did James do this? If yes, why? Is it to buy my trust?" She asked.

Lily nodded for the first question and rolled her eyes on the second one. She flopped to sit beside her and said, "It's not 'buy', it's 'get'. And not only trust, but also love."

She waited until her dense friend understood her words before continuing, "He really loves you, you know? Try talking to him."

Severin sighed. All conversations with Lily led to the same place.

"Lily, I won't hear it again."

For her big surprise, Lily shrugged, "As you wish." She said lightly. It wasn't typical for Lily to give up so easily, but Severin couldn't think about it because the redhead went on immediately. "You might be open to see it then."

Severin turned sharply to her, "What?"

Lily smiled victoriously and pointed with her finger at the big screen on the opposite wall. As if by a sign, the interviewer started talking to a tall, black-haired guy leaning comfortably on a red armchair.

Severin was not the only one, the eyes of all customers also turned to the same place and listened to the ongoing conversation.

There, James was reclining on the chair, talking animatedly with the interviewer. After exchanging polite greetings, the interviewer decided to cut to the chase, "So, Mr.Potter, we heard that you recently parted ways from Miss Black."

The famous star nodded, confirming his words. The interview smiled brightly, knowing that this is a scoop, "May I inquire why? Was it a one sided break up or..?"

James chuckled, "No, it was mutual. Narcissa is an excellent woman in any way. It's just that both of us did not love each other the way we are supposed to."

"What you meant by that is..?" The interviewer prompted eagerly.

James met his expectation by answering, "For one, I could not move on."

Severin widened her eyes at the same time as the restaurant exploded into ruckus. Her jaw slacked as she gaped before turning to the smiling Lily.

Just before she could get a word out of her mouth, the interview continued, "Ohhh, is this about the mysterious girl?"

A gentle smile appeared in the corner of James's mouth as he nodded.

Severin's heart missed a beat. What. What it just was. It seemed honest, but how could she trust someone she was just a game for?

"To tell the truth, that's exactly it."

The interviewer, as well as all viewers, leaped forward in anticipation of the star's words.

"We only really dated a few times, but breaking up with her was the hardest thing I ever went through." James let out a melancholy giggle, "You know how the brain already knows but the heart refuses to accept?"

In the tense silence that was going on, Severin could hear the buzz of a rogue fly bouncing around the room. All present seemed to hold their breath.

"Is it time for you to reveal the identity of the anonymous lucky girl?" The interviewer asked.

James shook his head. "I don't have the authority for that." He looked away so he looked straight at the camera. Severin froze. "The one who needs to know, knows."

"Well, okay." The interviewer sniffled in disappointment before continuing, "And there's no chance for us to know what caused the break up?"

"No. There isn't." James laughed amusedly. The interviewer rolled his eyes, "Well, audience, you heard him. I tried but our dear Jamie would not let us know anything about the lucky girl."

James grimaced and said, "If anything, I was the lucky one." He said with a smile. People thought he was joking, but Severin somehow knew he was not.

The interviewer accordingly laughed, "Is there anything you want to say to her? Perhaps she's watching at the moment."

James did not expect that question and fumbled for a bit, stuck in the middle of wanting to say something and refusing. In the end, he bit his lips before saying, "I'm really sorry. Give me another chance, please?"

Severin shook her head slightly, as if the guy could see her through the screen.

But he seemed to know her reaction beforehand. He gave a sad smile. "I was a terrible boyfriend. The whole blame is on me." James explained to the interviewer who eagerly drank every bit of information. "It would be unfair to ask for forgiveness. What I did was unforgivable." He stopped for a while and ran his tongue across his lips. "No words to express how sorry I am... I'm sorry, I'm sorry for everything. I'm sorry I realize too late."

The celebrity turned to the camera again and Severin felt that Hazel's eyes were staring straight at

her.

"I love you."

## Chapter 13

Severin gripped her bag strap tightly, trying to calm herself as she stared at the door to the cafe.

Taking a deep breath, she decided to just go to hell with it and took her first step, opening the door wide.

At the same time, James lifted his head, causing their gaze to meet with each other for a while before he smiled awkwardly. Sev gulped as she remembered what made her decided to do this and took another breath, taking another step to approach him.

*"I love you"*

*The moment that sentence was said, Severin could only lower her head, staring into her fisted hands on her lap.*

*Lily cautiously watched her reaction and was stuck in between of trying to convince her to trust James and just wait.*

*She sighed and decided to just get on with the former idea when she heard Snape say, "Lily.. what do you think should I do?" The black haired female turned around and stared at her somberly.*

*She really doesn't know what to do or what is right anymore. What if.. what if when she does forgive him, it turns out that it was another lie? What would she do then?*

*As much as she doesn't want to admit it, she knew that she was in too deep when she failed the last exam, knew that he had affected her. That's why the lie hit her hard.*

*If this turns out to be another lie, Severin doesn't know if she can get back up again.*

*"I don't know if I can trust him again.." Severin whispered brokenly.*

*Lily stared at her friend, "Oh Sev.." She hugged her tightly and ran her fingers through her hair to soothe her, "You two badly missed each other. That was a mistake on his part, but.. but I think he's worth another chance, Sev. Give him another shot."*

*Severin hesitated for a long time before she nodded in the end. She knew she couldn't go on like this anymore.*

*Lily couldn't hold back her beam and tightened her hug until Severin hugged her back. After a while, she released her friend, "First, you should meet him and then talk it out."*

Severin finally made the appointment, but now that she was in the cafe and saw the familiar figure in front of her eyes, she couldn't help but feel it was a mistake. She looked away. Only the look on the face of the star was too painful.

She didn't know what she was supposed to do. Just wish she could have given them another chance, but it was too much... she just couldn't.

Lily tried to talk her out of it, but in the end gave up. She merely gave her a weak smile and supported her. And Sev must admit that she was glad for her support because she doesn't even

know if what she's doing is right.

James stood up to her but she didn't notice it, she closed her eyes and took a deep breath, helpless. To James' credit, it can be said that he was silent and did not try to confuse her sequence of thoughts.

She opened her eyes again to his smile and forced herself to walk to the table. They were silent, James glancing at her with hope in his eyes.

Severin felt a pang of hurt but steeled herself by taking a few minutes to organize her thoughts. "James... I appreciate what you did for me, and the money..." She let out a shaky breath and swallowed, "Thank you."

James nodded quietly, examining her face, sadly marking the lack of mutuality. He lowered his head and clenched his fists.

"But I can't." James expected it, but it was still painful. Is he so desperately clinging to false hope?

"I don't think we're supposed to be together."

"Severin..." The guy spoke for the first time. "It was a mistake I would regret for the rest of my life, please don't give up on us so quickly..."

Severin was silent and James felt his heartbeat accelerate nervously. "I'll... think about it. If I'm willing to give it a go at all... But you knew that I'm moving to America this semester." Her voice sounded quiet and James's breath caught in his throat. "During that period, give me time."

James was silent for a while, before relaxing his grip. His voice was hoarse and trembling when he said, "I understand."

He had asked Lily when he was trying to reconcile with Severin, so he knew that Severin wanted to go to Ilvermorny, which is located in America.

He understood that it'll completely cut off any possible relation during that time (if Severin ever forgives him) but.. He also understood that he had to support her dream too if they want this to work, not only during that period, but also after that.

So in the end, he recommended her name to a friend working in that university.

Severin let out a breath. She then stood up and said, "Then.. goodbye James." His name was said in a whisper, so muted that James could barely hear it.

Severin took one last look at the side profile of the man who captured her heart without even noticing.

That distance was necessary, even if something pinched in her heart. She left and walked away from the cafe. The period in America can be a new beginning for her.

James could only nod, his throat dry and he looked at her back as she walked out of the cafe and finally whispered hoarsely. "I'll wait for you..." he said quietly. "I promise."

Fin.



## Epilogue

"Is she here yet?" Lily anxiously asked while standing on her tiptoes as she glanced around.

Her mother rolled her eyes, "You asked that a minute ago! Sit still!" Mr.Evans laughed at his daughter's and wife's exchange.

Lily pouted before trudging to sit on the chair. The notification of the plane landing has rung from 30 mins ago but her friend has not came out yet.

"Oh there she is!" Lily immediately jumped up when she heard her mother's shout.

Severin glanced around the lounge before hearing shouts of her names. She saw Lily waving excitedly at her and approached them before being engulfed in an embrace, "Congrats on your graduation!"

Mr and Mrs.Evans clapped on her back with proud smiles with the latter saying, "We watched your valedictory, Lily cried three times."

Severin grinned and whispered thank yous. She then turned to Lily, "You cried?"

Lily punched her shoulder, "Oh shut up. Who wouldn't cry if someone mentioned their names in her valedictory speech?"

The black haired girl rolled her eyes. Lily beamed and then pulled her, "Let's go! We have booked a restaurant for the feast!"

"You have to tell me everything, you hear, young lady?"

"Lils, we talked every week, you're more up-to-date on what's going on in my life than me."

"This is not an excuse." Lily stated, "Phone calls don't count. I haven't seen you in five years!"

Severin laughed fondly as excited Lily pulled her back after her vigorously. She missed her best friend so much, even though they talked a lot, they never meet all this time. International flights and academic studies were not something to simply disregard.

"Sev, I just can't believe it. You did it, do you realize? You have fulfilled your dream, you are just a heroine!Come on, start telling!"

Severin laughed, "What? You already know everything."

"Not EVERYTHING, right?" Lily shook her eyebrows.

The brunette rolled her eyes but smiled as she started telling her about trivial things. There are not that much that Lily didn't know after all.

Time went on like that and before they knew it, it was already late. Lily convinced her to stay the night, telling her mother they had much to talk about.

Mrs. Evans only ruffled her daughter's hair and said indulgently, "Well, go on. Just don't stay up to

late.”

Lily squealed before pulling Snape to her room, ransacking her wardrobe to find clothes for her. They laid down on their backs and Lily started telling her about things that had changed while she was gone.

“...Started telling them everything. And then, James-“ Lily cut herself short before eyeing Snape apologetically.

Snape only snorted and waved her to continue. Lily heaved a relieved sigh but hesitated.

She rolled on her side to face Snape and asked, “Uh, Sev, can I know what happened between you two during your study? I knew from him that you guys kept in contact, barely.”

Severin did not answer, clearly contemplating not to say anything. In the end, she sighed and gave up, “Well... sometimes, just sometimes, he sent me gifts on certain days.”

"No way!" Lily screamed, remembering the hour and lowering her voice, "I knew! I knew it wasn't just a game."

Severin looked at her cautiously.

"Don't tell me you're not following the news." Lily rolled her eyes.

Severin shrugged, "I saw a little." She admitted.

"Well, you know that for sure, don't you? James has changed." Severin did not respond. "I'm serious, Sev. He's grown up. He's not flirting anymore and hasn't been dating any girl since... you know."

Severin was silent and refused to look, as the silence lengthened Severin sighed quietly, "I know."

James had sent her a lot of gifts, and she appreciated that the gifts were not expensive things, rather, they were carefully thought over items that she might need.

She understood that he was trying to make her comfortable and she could not lie that she was moved. The reason she returned.. other than because of the job shifts, might also be because of him. Because she decided to give him the chance.

In the beginning, she thought maybe he will forget about her, or maybe he will be with another person the next time they meet. That way, she wouldn't have to be the one who decides. But seeing the current condition, she knew that she had to and she finally gave up keeping up the pretense of hating him.

Because through all this time, she no longer did.

Perhaps, giving him another chance will be a mistake, but this time... she thinks it's worth risking over.

She closed her eyes and said, "Let's sleep." Lily pursed her lips but the softness in Sev's eyes earlier relieved her. She decided to let her friend go and pulled the blanket over.

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Severin was sitting in a restaurant where James and she have a date on the first time. A kind of closed circle, she thought to herself. Lily said she would make sure James came, so all that was left

for Severin to do was get dressed and come.

That was the first time she arrived before James, the situation couldn't help but make her nervous. Maybe James's gifts were just reconciliation gifts. In five years, he couldn't hold on to an old and almost hopeless promise... She sighed to herself. It was to be expected if he already had someone new, or he just moved on. He could grow up or just keep his private life off the screens...

She closed her eyes, basically, time may have forgotten the past. Maybe she missed the opportunity, maybe he doesn't love her anymore. But she did want to see him, at least once more, out of the TV, to tell him she forgave him, long ago. Because even if she never said it, she learned to love him.

The doorbell rang a gentle ring as the man's figure entered. The years have done him good. His beauty was more refined and elegant but his eyes had the same mesmerizing light remained.

Severin swallowed and waited for him to come closer. She looked at the single red rose he was handing and took it quietly. James smiled and Severin hesitantly returned the gesture.

They settled down after ordering the menu. It was quiet, and awkward. Severin tried to find a topic of conversation but could not find any so she could only glare at the rose petals.

A huff of laughter escaped James' lips. Severin jerked her head up before lifting one of her eyebrows questioningly.

"My bad." James scratched the back of his neck with a smile before continuing, "How have you been?"

Severin looked better. A touch of maturity had graced her features, as well as giving her an air of confidence. James can only find himself helplessly charmed by her once again.

"Fine." Perhaps, the girl felt the response was too short as she added, "America's nice. How about you?"

James smiled before starting to recount things and telling her. At first, Severin was still wary and tense, but she softened in the end, laughing and joking along with him.

He missed this. Her snarky jokes and light laughs. Just like in the past, he found himself smiling more whenever she smiles at him.

He missed her, badly. He wanted to just pull her into his embrace. But he didn't want to mess this up, again.

Severin only noticed so much time has passed when they finished their food. She uneasily clenched her skirt, which she got forced to wear again. She decided to just get on with it.

James stared at her pursed lips and noticed she was uncomfortable. He thought that she had something to do and quickly said,

"Should we go?"

"I forgave you."

Both of them froze. Severin flushed, her pale skin pink. James blinked surprisedly before delight bloomed in his chest, "...Pardon?"

The girl scowled at him but repeated after fumbling with her words, "...I forgave you." She pursed her lips and this time, quieter, "Since a long time ago."

There was no response for a long time before Severin glanced up. James instantly snapped out of his stupor and he couldn't resist the huge smile tugging on his lips.

Severin clearly saw his sparkling eyes. "Thank you, Sev. That means a lot more to me than you can imagine." He said honestly.

Severin's heartbeat thundered in her ears as she asked clumsily, "You... what about you..?" She hated being so at a loss for words, but James seemed to understand her.

"Do you ask if I moved on?"

Severin was silent, she was burning with the desire to know and the desire to just stay away and prevent her heart from breaking.

James took the smartphone out of his pocket and slid it toward her across the table. After a brief hesitation, the girl took the device in her hands and pressed the open key. The device turns on and the screen saver turn visible to her eyes. It was her, dressed in Lily's red dress and looking a little annoyed.

"If you allowed, I would like to try to start again." James's hand found her own and he squeezed it slightly.

His heart beat faster as he waited nervously for her answer. Severin noticed that his hands were cold from the nervousness.

She bit her lip and looked up at him, "After..." She swallowed and whispered in a thick voice, "After all this time?"

James smiled and leaned toward her.

"Always."

# Summary:

There is no one who can resist James's charm.

It was a well-known rule.

As a world-loved celebrity, he broke more hearts than could count.

But what happens when the young star meets someone who doesn't fall at his feet like everyone else?